

isn't even old-fashioned thinking. It isn't in tune with the times in America. It doesn't reflect reality.

For the Republicans to argue that unless it is bricks and mortar, the government shouldn't be involved in building it for the good of the economy and the strength of business and good-paying jobs really is sinking their head deep into the sand.

And I think we ought to make a record, at least for the moment, that in the last 4 years of the last Presidential administration, there were no infrastructure bills—none. After all the promises of the Trump campaign and what he would bring, nothing happened—nothing. So to be lectured by the Republicans about what infrastructure is all about is to suggest to them that they missed a golden opportunity to help America, and we are not going to miss it.

To think that the Republican definition of infrastructure in America does not include the expansion of broadband coverage across this Nation—what are they thinking? Their minds are back 10 and 20 years ago.

Is broadband coverage for all Americans in every corner of this country a socialist idea to the Republicans? I think it is a commonsense idea to the people of America. They know it when their kids have laptops, and they have to sit in the parking lot of a library or next to a McDonald's or Starbucks in order to get access. They know what that means to their child, to their student in terms of their progress. Businesses know it too.

Try to advertise some section of America without access to broadband coverage to locate a new business. It is a laughing matter, and we know it.

So when President Biden suggests that broadband is part of infrastructure in America and then he is mocked as being a socialist by the Republicans, we have a clear definition of where the party values are today.

When it comes to other basic things, the Senator from Kentucky just doesn't empathize with what families go through to put people on the job. It isn't just a matter of finding a good job and being qualified to fill that job. There is also a family concern—a family concern that can literally make a difference as to whether you take that job.

The Democrats believe that childcare—affordable quality childcare—is part of the equation in terms of good-paying jobs being filled by Americans, where families want to be sure their kids are safe.

Is that socialism? Is that another example of socialism for the Republicans—quality daycare, affordable for families? It is not socialism in my book. It is a family value. That is why I think the efforts of the Republicans to run down President Biden's attempts to strengthen this economy really are antiquated and perhaps not in the best interest of this country.

NOMINATION OF VANITA GUPTA

Mr. President, we will be voting in a few minutes on Vanita Gupta.

Yesterday was a day that many Americans will never forget with the decision in a trial in Minnesota, carefully watched by millions across America and around the world. The death of George Floyd was a stark moment, when one piece of videotape has been emblazoned in the minds of people in the United States and around the world.

Under the knee of Officer Chauvin, George Floyd lost his life on a street in Minneapolis. Whether there would be accountability and justice as a result was an unanswered question until yesterday, and the answer came through loud and clear. The jury spoke, and justice was served. And now we have a responsibility to move forward.

The reason I make reference to that in light of the nomination of Vanita Gupta is the fact that the path to civil rights progress in America is often difficult and, for those who try to lead, often a lonely battle.

Vanita Gupta has taken more than her fair share of criticism from the Republican side of the aisle. I sometimes find it hard to believe that this amazing, outstanding, remarkable young woman is being degraded by so many Republicans when she comes to the floor for consideration by the Senate.

She has a record that is incredible. She is the right person for this job in the Department of Justice as Associate Attorney General. She is unquestionably well-qualified. She would be the first civil rights attorney and the first woman of color to be an Associate Attorney General. And, you know, I think that is at the heart of the problem as far as some Republicans are concerned. They are just not ready for that kind of change. Well, they should be.

Anybody who has turned on the news in the last week has seen that we need police reform in this country. We need to repair the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Vanita Gupta has a proven track record of doing just that. As head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, she led efforts to reform police departments across the Nation, and she did it in a way that brought people together: civil rights advocates, community leaders, and police and law enforcement. As a result, she has incredibly broad support.

When I hear them talk about defunding the police and how she is anti-police, how in the world do the Republicans explain the fact that she has the support of every major law enforcement group in this country? They just conveniently ignore that fact. If anything they said were true—really true—do you think that the Fraternal Order of Police would be standing behind her, as well as the civil rights community?

Consider this statement from the Federal Law Enforcement Association.

They said: "Ms. Gupta has a proven history of working with law enforcement agencies, corrections officials, advocates, stakeholders, and elected officials across the political spectrum."

That is an incredible statement for an attorney—a civil rights attorney—who has not shied away from the battle, has walked into the most controversial situations in her time, and has proven over and over that she can not only just get the job done but she can do it to the satisfaction of both sides believing she was fair in the process.

She has the support of outstanding conservatives like Grover Norquist, Michael Chertoff, and Mark Holden, former counsel of Koch Industries.

I listened to the Republicans' baseless charges and smears against Ms. Gupta last week, and I find it amazing that they can ignore every law enforcement group that supports her and every leading conservative spokesman who has come out for her.

She has been the head of the Department's Civil Rights Division. She led efforts to prosecute human trafficking, combat religious discrimination, protect the rights of men and women in uniform, and to ensure that members of our military are not taken advantage of.

She has a career as a civil rights lawyer. This book tells the story. Six months out of law school, working for the Legal Defense Fund, she ended up taking an assignment in Tulia, TX. Why did she take this assignment? Because, when she did, there were some 40 people who had been arrested in this town. One out of every five Black adults in town was behind bars, all accused of dealing cocaine to the same undercover officer, Tom Coleman.

Coleman, the son of a well-known Texas ranger, had been named "Officer of the Year" in Texas. Not until after the trials in which Coleman's uncorroborated testimony secured sentences as long as 361 years—that is not a typo, 361 years—did it become apparent that Mr. Coleman had misrepresented his own qualifications and, sadly, misrepresented all of the cases before him.

Two dozen people were in prison, most of them African Americans. The town of Tulia had become a battlefield in the national debate over the war on drugs. And who was sent into this to represent the civil rights of those sitting in jail, who had been wrongly convicted? Vanita Gupta. Six months out of law school, she went down to Texas.

I would imagine that, 6 months out of law school, I was still searching for the right place to eat lunch with a partner in a firm—but not her. She went down there and became an outstanding advocate. And what happened as a result? As a result of her efforts and the efforts of other civil rights attorneys and the courage they showed, the determination they showed, the Republican Governor of Texas, Perry,

ended up pardoning every one of these criminal defendants and authorized the payment of millions of dollars in compensation for their damages.

And so when we hear from the Republicans that she is not ready for prime time, she is too radical, she can't handle this job, we are all going to vote against her—and they have—you think to yourself: Did they ever take a minute to read what she has done with her life, time and time again?

I will tell you, it is incredible to me that we are at this moment in history that a woman of color with an extraordinary civil rights record wants to make history in the Department of Justice, wants to continue to serve this Nation, representing our government and prosecuting cases for the American people, that she is prepared to take her experience and expertise and sit down and try to help us solve these monumental challenges we currently face and can't get a single Republican to stand in support—not one. It is hard to imagine.

Well, as I mentioned before, she has tackled tough assignments before successfully in the cause of the name of justice. The Justice Department, her service there, the Tulia case, which many don't want to talk about, has been true throughout her career. She is guided by an unshakable belief in upholding the rule of law and vindicating the rights of those who are too frequently taken advantage of, marginalized, and forgotten.

To Vanita Gupta, the people who have suffered discrimination in this country matter. She has dedicated her life to that. It troubles some. It wrangles them. It makes them angry, but the fact of the matter is, she is an extraordinary, essentially amazing woman in my estimation.

She has demonstrated already what kind of leader she is, what kind of courage she had 6 months out of law school to go to Tulia, TX, and to represent people already serving time in jail, who were ultimately released.

She also has a proven record of bipartisanship, a record of working with law enforcement and community leaders, and a record of upholding the rule of law.

In just a few minutes—3 or 4 minutes—the Senate will get a chance to advance her nomination, and perhaps several hours after that, we will finally give her the vote of confidence she deserves to join the Department of Justice, Merrick Garland, and now Lisa Monaco, who is being sworn in today, and be part of the team that heard the message in Minnesota yesterday and is prepared to move forward to make America a better place for all, a better place for opportunity and equality and real justice.

We need the right people in the Department of Justice at this moment in history more than ever in current memory, and we have the beginnings of that team with our Attorney General and with Lisa Monaco. Vanita Gupta

should join them. She should be able, the day after tomorrow or even sooner, if possible, to be sworn into office and have this opportunity to continue her service to the Department of Justice and the cause of justice. That, to me, is indicated by her background and by the endorsement she has faced.

When you hear the bad comments about her from the other side of the aisle, pause and think for a moment: But, Senator, if she is so bad, why did all of the law enforcement groups in America support her? Why do all the civil rights organizations support her? Why does she have the support of so many conservatives, even in the business community, if she is as bad as you say she is?

The honest answer is she is not. She is a quality individual with remarkable credentials and a remarkable wealth of experience that she wants to continue to bring to our government. I hope the Senate will give her that opportunity. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks before the vote.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it is another day and another manufactured crisis. Yesterday, I came down to the floor to talk about the supposed crisis of confidence in the Supreme Court that requires us to immediately add four additional Democrat-chosen Justices.

Today, I want to talk about another manufactured crisis, and that is the supposed election crisis that requires us to pass H.R. 1, a Democrat piece of legislation designed to increase Democrats' chances of maintaining their current tenuous hold on power.

H.R. 1 is not new legislation. Democrats introduced a nearly identical version of this bill in the last Congress as well. Back then, we were told that we needed this bill to address profound electoral problems in our democracy—in other words, Democrats didn't like the results of the 2016 elections.

Then, of course, last year, we had an election with record voter turnout—the highest voter turnout since 1900—an election that gave Democrats the Presidency and paper-thin majorities in Congress, and the story changed. Now we are told that we need to pass H.R. 1 and federalize elections because legislatures around the country are passing “voter suppression” laws.

The State of Georgia recently passed an election reform measure—a law that keeps Georgia squarely in the mainstream when it comes to State election laws.

The Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives noted yesterday in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee that while Georgia has made its no-excuse absentee voting

more secure with this law, States like Delaware and New York—among many others—don't even allow no-excuse voting.

Delaware, of course, is the home State of the President of the United States. New York is the home State of the Democratic leader. I haven't noticed the President or the Democratic leader criticizing their home States for voter suppression. Nevertheless, Democrats decided that the Georgia measure would serve as a useful rallying cry for H.R. 1, so they spread a web of misinformation and outright lies, attempting to get people worked up by portraying Georgia's fairly ordinary election reform laws as a radical attempt to suppress voters and to suppress votes.

President Biden irresponsibly described the law as “Jim Crow on steroids,” as if the Georgia Legislature had decided to reinstate the evil of segregation. The President has been repeatedly rebuked by none other than the Washington Post for repeating a completely false claim about the Georgia law. In fact, the Washington Post gave the President four Pinocchios—a rating that the Post reserves for “whoppers”—for his false claim that the law is designed to keep working Americans from voting. In fact, as the Post's Fact Checker piece makes clear, there is reason to think the law might actually—wait for it, Mr. President—expand access to early voting.

A fair-minded piece in the New York Times, hardly a newspaper that carries water for Republicans, concluded that the voting provisions of the Georgia law are “unlikely to significantly affect turnout or Democratic chances.” But that hasn't stopped Democrats from using Georgia's law as the poster child for supposed voter suppression and the pressing reason to pass H.R. 1.

Let's talk about the substance of H.R. 1. To start with, this legislation would transfer control over elections from States to the Federal Government despite the fact that the Constitution gives primary control over elections to the States. Under this law, States' ability to develop election systems that address the needs and challenges facing their States would be substantially limited.

Of course, Democrats would like us to believe that this Federal power grab is urgently needed since, they argue, States are contemplating voter suppression laws, but as I pointed out, the last election, with its record turnout—the largest turnout since 1900—did not exactly suggest that States are incapable of setting their own election rules.

Ironically, H.R. 1, which purports to be an election integrity bill, would actually undermine election integrity. The bill takes aim at State voter ID laws—a longtime obsession, I might add, of the Democrats. I have always been at a loss to understand Democrats' passionate opposition to requiring people to provide identification before voting.